

Appln No. 10/606,165

Amdt date July 21, 2005

Reply to Office action of March 21, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

A final Rejection was mailed March 21, 2005. A Request for Continued Examination is submitted herewith. Claims 1, 17, 18, 19 and 21 are amended.

In view of the above, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 1-2, 4-5, 10-11, 13, 15-18, 21-22, 24-26, and 28-31. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with applicant's attorney might expedite the prosecution of the application, he is invited to call at the telephone number indicated above.

Claims 1-2, 4-5, 10-11, 13, 15-18, 21-22, 24-26, and 28-31 are pending in the above-referenced application. Claims 3, 6-9, 12, 14, 19-20, 23 and 27 are canceled without prejudice, and claims 28-31 added to further define Applicants' invention.

This is a Response to the Final Office Action dated March 21, 2005 wherein the Examiner rejected claim 23 under §112, 2nd paragraph; and rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, and 15-27 under §102(e) as being anticipated by Mano et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,712,649). In view of the amendments as indicated above and the remarks that follow, reconsideration and a notice of allowance are respectfully requested.

§112, 2nd Paragraph Rejection of Claim 23

In rejecting claim 23, the Examiner contends that the term "the base product" lacks antecedent support. Claim 23 has been canceled as indicated above. The rejection is now moot in view of the cancellation.

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§102(e) Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, and 15-
27 by Mano et al.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, and 15-27 are rejected as being anticipated by Mano et al. Of the rejected claims, claims 1, 17, and 18 are independent claims.

Independent claim 1 has been amended as indicated above to recite, among other things, a first position that permits "insertion of the front facing wall and the handle portion of the tab through the opening of the faceplate in a direction from the rear facing surface of the faceplate to the front facing surface of the faceplate." In contrast, Mano describes a lever terminal 103 that is inserted into a terminal plate 101 in an opposite direction, i.e., in a direction from the front facing surface of the faceplate (at 101) to the rear facing surface of the faceplate. Accordingly, the Mano lever housing can only be mounted to the faceplate in a wholly different and opposite manner as compared to the connector recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Mano cannot anticipate claim 1 by disclosing each and every element of the claimed connector assembly.

Because claims 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 21, 22, and 24-26 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 1, they too are allowable over Mano for at least the reasons discussed above for the allowance of claim 1.

Independent claim 17 has been amended to recite, among other things, a spring clip connector assembly comprising a spring engaging the tab and not engaging the faceplate to bias the tab to a closed position. In this regards, the Mano reference is inapposite as Mano discloses a connector assembly

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(FIGs. 11 and 12) in which a spring engages a faceplate to bias a tab to a closed position. Accordingly, Mano cannot anticipate claim 17 by disclosing each and every element of the claimed connector assembly.

Because claims 28 and 29 depend directly from claim 17, they too are allowable over Mano for at least the reasons discussed above for the allowance of claim 17.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to recite, among other things, a method for securing a spring clip connector to a faceplate by moving the front wall of the housing to a first position relative to the faceplate, the front wall in the first position being spaced apart from the faceplate by a first distance, and moving the front wall of the housing to a second position relative to the faceplate to engage the latch piece with the faceplate, the front wall in the second position being spaced apart from the faceplate by a second distance; wherein the second distance is greater than the first distance.

In this regards, the Mano reference is again inapposite as the connector assemblies (FIGs. 1-4, 7-9a, and 10-13) disclosed by Mano all have a front wall that moves closer to the faceplate when mounted thereto instead of away. Accordingly, Mano cannot anticipate claim 18 by disclosing each and every step of the claimed method.

Because claims 21, 22, 24-26, and 30-31 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 18, they too are allowable over Mano for at least the reasons discussed above for the allowance of claim 18.

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In view of the amendments and remarks as set forth above, the application is thought to be in condition for allowance and early notice thereof is respectfully solicited. In the event the Examiner believes otherwise, Applicants respectfully request a formal telephone interview before the next Action to review the '649 Mano et al. patent and the pending claims as this opinion would clearly show a misunderstanding by one or the other party of either the teachings of the '649 patent and/or the scope of the claims. Applicants' attorney can be reached by contacting the undersigned at the telephone number identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTIE, PARKER & HALE, LLP

By 

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626/795-9900

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